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Academics Still Secretly Inform CIA

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The CIA continues to maintain an "invaluable" network of academic informants on college and university faculties upon which it "depends daily...for information, guidance and insight," CIA officials have acknowledged in court records here.

The disclosure of the continued CIA use of unidentified academicians follows by two years a suggestion by the Senate Select Intelligence Committee that all such contacts be open instead of covert.

In affidavits filed in a Freedom of Information Act suit here, CIA officials said it is generally up to the professor to decide whether to disclose his voluntary CIA cooperation to his employer.

Several sources familiar with intelligence gathering said, however, that it would be highly unlikely for most CIA informants to disclose to superiors their cooperation with the agency.

Occasionally, CIA officials said, relationships are kept secret by the academicians "at our request."

More often, the CIA officials added, "they are discreet at the scholar's request because of his concern that he will be badgered by those who feel he should not" cooperate.

In the court case, brought by a California man seeking records concerning the agency's relationship with the University of California, the CIA says the scholars are considered "sources of intelligence" and therefore secret under federal laws.

As justification for withholding the names of University of California personnel who might be involved with the agency, the CIA filed two affidavits that give a public accounting of the current use of academicians.

John F. Blake, deputy director for administration, said in his affidavit

that all the relationships with academicians are for "foreign intelligence purposes."

Most of the contacts are with professors who "have traveled abroad" or who are experts in various fields of study, he said. However, one element of the agency maintains confidential contacts with college personnel "for assistance in the recruitment of foreign intelligence sources," he added.

He called cooperation with academicians "vital to the intelligence collection mission of the CIA."

Regular contacts with them "enable us to keep abreast of professional developments, including new insights, interpretations, and methodologies," Blake continued.

Public disclosure of the contacts might result in "active and abrasive campaigns to discover and expose the individuals concerned on at least some" campuses, he said.

Blake said cooperating academicians in many cases "place their reputations, credibility, livelihood and in some cases even their lives on the line in providing information."

The CIA's personnel director, F.W.M. Janney, said in an affidavit that the campus contacts are necessary to properly protect national security. He said in many fields it is "absolutely essential that the agency have available to it the single greatest source of expertise: the American academic community."

CIA analysts at its National Foreign Assessment Center consult regularly with the academicians on an "informal and personal basis, often by telephone," with the understanding that the contacts will be confidential, Janney said.

Janney said, without specifying, that scholars whose CIA contacts have become public were subjected to harassment and ridicule by students and other faculty members.

"There is also evidence that such

scholars, despite recognized standing in their fields of expertise, have been subjected to professional disabilities, including denial of tenure and dismissed from their positions as a result of acknowledging such informal contacts with the CIA," Janney said.

The Senate Select Intelligence Committee said in an April 1976 report that many of the CIA's contacts with academicians are not dangerous but that the "operational use" of academicians raised serious questions about preserving the integrity of academic institutions.

According to the committee, several hundred American academics, "in addition to providing leads, and, on occasion, making introductions for intelligence purposes, occasionally write books and other material to be used for propaganda purposes abroad. Beyond these, an additional few score are used in an unwitting manner for minor activities."

In suggesting that all contacts with academics be open, the senators said:

"... If the CIA is to serve the intelligence needs of the nation, it must have unfettered access to the best advice and judgment our universities can produce. But this advice and expertise can and should be openly sought—and openly given."